

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

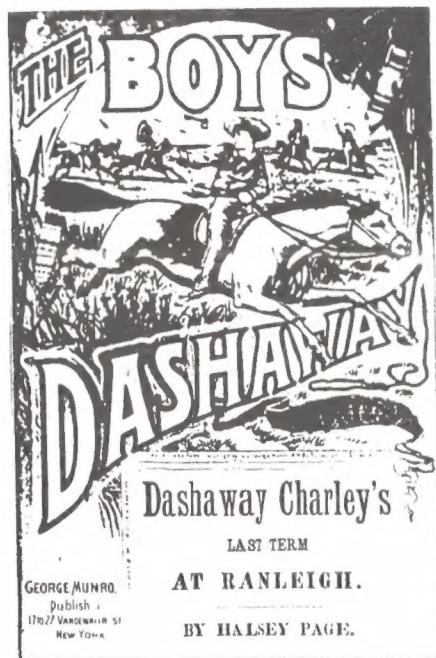
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THE WASP IN PERPETUITY

By Alan Pickrell



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THE BOYS' DASHAWAY SERIES

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THE WASP IN PERPETUITY*

By Alan Pickrell

From the beginnings of recorded time, human beings have applied stereotypical prejudices to other human beings. The ancient Greeks, the first major civilization of the Western world, from which our own culture is derived, referred to non-Greek speaking individuals as "barbarians." Barbaros, root of barbarian, is Greek for "babble," which, to the ears of the ancients, was exactly the way any language, other than their own, sounded. Furthermore, we know that the Athenians despised the Spartans for their lack of culture and luxury, while the Spartans despised the Athenians for their effete, soft lifestyle. In earliest times, because there was no system of print available to widely disperse public opinions and biases, the agora and the theatre became the major mediums to convey and debate ideologies and to spread intolerances.

To avoid the extremes provoked by such debates, the Greek philosopher Aristotle, in his NICHOMACHEAN ETHICS, gave voice to the concept of the mean. Given that Aristotle and his teacher, Plato, were the two major influences on all thought in Western culture, individuals who have never read either of the two philosophers are still influenced and guided by their precepts. Certainly Aristotle's virtue of the mean-nothing in excess-has been responsible for a social order which glorifies the sameness and standardization of a middle class, while condemning and deploring any deviation from that ideal. It is, as a consequence, this latter concept which leads to both stereotyping and prejudice. This concept also means that, somehow, this middle class ideal must contend with those variations from it, which threaten its routine standard. There are generally two responses to anything that threatens a widely held position or belief: the first is to diminish the danger of the threat by laughing at it; the second response is to enlarge the threat until it becomes an archetypal symbol of a negative emotion (fear, hatred, or evil).

The dramatic literature of our culture's history reveals these two time-honored responses to the deviation from the norm, and in so doing, perpetuated a succession of stereotypes and prejudices.

By the mid-19th century in the United States, the stage was the major means of family entertainment. The two most popular genres were the melodrama and a new variety format called "vaudeville." The nation was a new world power with immigrants from other nations arriving daily and bringing their own cultures, customs, and lifestyles from their native lands. These immigrants were deviants from the middle class American character, and so they were presented accordingly on the stages of the time, just as deviant concepts were presented on the Greek stages of the ancient time. African-American, German, Irish, Oriental, Jewish, and Native American characters were presented either as villains or extreme comic characters. In addition, as the country developed into rural and urban regions, such stereotypical characters as the Yankee, the City Boy, and the Southerner emerged--each based in its own biased stereotype.

This era was also the time of books for juvenile readers. There was an explosion of books published especially for young people-of all ages. Since the books were intended to both interest and instruct morally, many of the authors chose to use the melodramatic plots which were popular on the stage at the time, and sought to induce a devotion to the societal

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mean of thought and behavior by presenting prejudicial stereotypes as either clownish types of people or as the ultimate in villains.

By the turn of the 20th century, juvenile series books which made regular use of the melodramatic format had become a staple of book publishers and a favorite device of authors. Intentionally or not, a pattern of stereotypical prejudice evolved which perpetuated biases against groups of people who did not fit the WASP standard for acceptability. These biases became an accepted part of the American life and thought of their time. Consequently, the protagonists of these series emerged as Caucasian, Protestant, well-proportioned, athletic, intelligent, respectable, moral, attractive, usually middle class individuals who represented a norm in class, behavior, society, and thought. The adversities that these heroes faced were brought about by others who deviated from this established norm and, by so doing, became villains. Other complications derived from the comic conditions resultant from mean deviation, as well.

Two popular boys' series, which originated right around the turn of the century, are FRANK MERRIWELL and the ROVER BOYS. Frank and the brothers (Tom, Dick, and Sam) are specimens of healthy, moral American youth. All of them come from small towns and represent the best that America has to offer: bright-eyed, intelligent, moral, clean-living, physically active youth. In each series, the boys keep company with young women who are of the same superior moral and social fiber that makes the heroes so outstanding. And these relationships are ideal: the boys treat the girls with the utmost respect and tenderness. While no great deal of attention is paid to religion in the books, it is, from time to time, mentioned that the hero and/or his chums have attended church or chapel on a Sunday morning, before setting out on a canoe ride or going for a vigorous and refreshing trek through the woods. A clear implication arises: all of the heroes/heroines of series books must be Protestants--and pretty middle-of-the-road Protestants, at that. They do not attend services on Saturday, so they cannot be Seventh Day Adventists or Jewish. They do not attend Mass, nor do they go to confession, so they cannot be Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox; they do not attend Hebrew School, Temple, nor Synagogue, so they cannot be Jewish, and the fact that they attend at all means that they are not Atheist, and probably not Agnostic. Obviously, they are Caucasian and, most importantly, they are American! Generally, our heroes and heroines are represented as being of fair complexion with light or brown hair, ruddy cheeks, and blue eyes which definitely comprise an Anglo-Saxon look. In fact, with the exception of Frank Hardy, young men with swarthy complexions, dark hair, and dark eyes tend to be intellectually, physically, and morally inferior to their paler brothers.

Frank Merriwell attends Fardale Military Academy. In the beginning of the series, Frank believes himself to be an orphan under the sponsorship of his uncle, Asher Merriwell. Frank is a natural leader who excels at anything he undertakes, because he is willing to work hard to achieve his goals. He is open-hearted, generous, and the concept of envying others is totally foreign to him. But there are others who are envious of Frank and consistently try to harm him physically, to harm his reputation, and to harm the esteem in which others hold him. These others are, what might be designated as, "city boys," like those presented on the popular stage of the era. These young men are deviations from the mores and ways of the small town ideal of life. They are "sophisticated" (i.e. "corrupted"); they drink alcoholic beverages, smoke, and gamble; they do not respect women; they are aimless and without goals; many times they attempt to use money to buy happiness, success, and prestige; they want success without working for it. Also, when these characters are afflicted by a reversal

of personal fortune which either changes or stops their cash flow, they resort to crime in order to get quick, easy money. They are so used to luxuries that they cannot do without them and seem to believe that, in some ways, they are deserving of and entitled to a luxurious style of living.

In addition to these stereotypical adversaries which graphically demonstrate the inferiority of the "city boy," Frank is surrounded by other inferior types which enhance Frank's own natural superiority: Bart Hodge is a former enemy of Frank's. Recently a sophisticated "city boy," Bart, under Frank's sterling influence, is attempting to change and give up such disreputable habits as smoking and gambling. In addition to Bart, Barney Mulloy, an Irish lad, is one of Frank's great pals. Barney comes complete with an Irish brogue so thick that he borders on unintelligibility. In fact, his diction is a parody of the Irish brogue in the same way that stage comedians parodied the influx of Irish immigrants into the United States. He is, in addition, both naive and credulous, but he is loyal to Frank.

Another chum, Hans Dunnerwurst, is, in fact, a double stereotype: a German fat boy. Hans is a stolid, self-satisfied, stubborn Teutonic with a dialect as exaggerated as is his appetite for food. His character is clearly based on the "Dutch" (Deutsch) comics who delighted vaudeville audiences. His stereotypical speech pattern and attitudes toward life make him appear to be good-natured, but dull and somewhat stupid. Barney and Hans also contrast with Ephraim Gallup, a Vermonter, who is the embodiment of the stage "Yankee." From rural America, Gallup has an unrefined way of speaking and is equally unrefined in appearance. Long, lean, lanky and homely, Gallup is shrewd in dealing with others, but is hardly an intellectual.

Frank, in contrast to his friends as well as his enemies, stands out as a real paragon of intelligence, virtue, and superiority. As well as cataloguing these national stereotypes of characters, Uncle Asher's estate is in the care of Toots, a faithful African-American servant. The depiction of Toots is drawn almost verbatim from T. D. Rice's "Jim Crow" stage characterization. Toots comes complete with slurred speech full of dialectal malapropisms, a shuffling walk, an affinity for alcohol, tendencies toward exaggeration, superstition, laziness, and prevarication. Toots is not a realistic portrait, but a caricature, of the faithful family retainer, dedicated to the family he serves, with little need of appreciation for his services. He attempts to disguise his shiftless nature and represents a universal conceptualization of African-Americans at the century's turn.

Amazingly enough, Frank, upstanding young American that he is and complete with all virtues, also has fun by capitalizing on the weaknesses of others by making fun of one character's deafness and the obesity of other characters. Young readers quickly learn that, within these stories, Frank is the character to emulate, while the others should be scorned and avoided. Without ever mentioning the word "prejudice," young people are taught an object lesson: different is not good; people who are different are inferior and naturally follow the leadership of a superior person, and that many people who are different will naturally resent and hate a superior person simply because that person *is* superior.

The ROVER BOYS series is, in many ways, similar to the MERRIWELL series. In the stories written by Arthur M. Winfield (Edward Stratemeyer), the three brothers also attend a military school, Putnam Hall. The motherless three are the sons of Anderson Rover of Valley Brook, and in many ways, their characters, dispositions, and attributes are similar to

those displayed by Frank Merriwell. Their enemies are much like Frank's, as well: "city boys" (or men) corrupted by sophistication and more money than they are capable of handling wisely. Their circle of friends includes Hans Mueller, a fat German boy, who could be exchanged for Hans Dunnerwurst, and no one would know the difference. However, the Rovers' acquaintance extends itself to a stereotype not so exaggerated in the catalogue of Merriwell associates: William Philander Tubbs is an intellectual elitist who is satirized by his overly dignified behavior and conversation. In actuality, he is the Americanization of the effete and "prissy" snob usually personified as a young Britisher of the "Tennis, anyone?" school on the popular stage. He is mocked and becomes the target of the other boys' jokes and humor. Again, he is a deviation from the norm represented by the active, manly Rover brothers.

At home, the boys are contrasted to Alex, the Afro-American family retainer, and to Jack Ness, the hired man, who is a variation of the stage Yankee. While Alex is a "brisk," business-like individual, he is still represented with all the dialectical peculiarities of the stereotypical African-American, in order to create a "humorous" character. As previously stated, humor, from time immorial, has been used as a tool to belittle persons who are, somehow, different from the majority of other people. Again, the object lesson is clear: the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant majority is superior to any other group, race, nationality, ethnic, or sect. In fact, one of the villains is Frank's own cousin, Carlos Merriwell. We know that he is a villain because of his "foreign," exotic sounding name, which contrasts with good, upstanding American names, such as Frank, Sam, Dick, or Tom. Anything with a touch of the foreign or exotic must be wrong and bad.

One minority figure which predominates other minorities in juvenile series literature before 1960 is that of the African-American. The majority attitude towards these people is best illustrated by a description from *THE BOBBSEY TWINS*. Flossie owns a doll, given to her by Dinah and Sam, the "colored" cook and stableman. The doll, Jujube, is a "colored" boy dressed in red with a blue cap and rubber boots. Flossie keeps all her dolls in a dresser drawer, but Jujube is separated from the rest by the cover of a pasteboard box placed between them. Although the Bobbseys' are very fond of Sam and Dinah, the cook and stableman are separated from them for two reasons: their race and their status. Dinah and Sam are definitely "help" and are treated as such. Dinah is plump and a comfortable personality, and Sam is wiry and able, and both are depicted as speaking with a "humorous" dialect which slurs, mispronounces, and exchanges words. Most importantly, both of these adults are totally deferential to these young children because of their respective races.

This major attitude toward African-Americans-separate from others, and by no means equal-forks into two primary representations of black people: one is the comic interpretation reserved for menials and which is vaguely affectionate (This pervasive attitude seems to be based in the conviction that these people are like children and have no worries or cares. That, like children, they just want to have a good time, and that, like children, they will pick up bright objects that do not belong to them, and that, like children, they will make a game of avoiding responsibility. It is these very characteristics which make them lovable.), while the other is vaguely threatening, ominous, and frightening (This attitude says that natural inferiors resent natural superiority and attempt to harm or hurt those who are naturally superior, out of ignorance, malice, and hatred.).

The first representation is best demonstrated by the *MISS MINERVA*

series which began with *MISS MINERVA AND WILLIAM GREEN HILL*, by Frances Boyd Calhoun in 1909. Orphaned Billy Green Hill, raised on the plantation by the servants there, comes to live with his maiden aunt, who immediately sets out to erase the influence of the plantation Negroes on Billy's life and thought. Once again, the simplicity of the black people is exploited for the sake of comedy. The Afro-American characters are gifted with a broad, "humorous" dialect, complete with comical word substitutions, and outrageous names, such as Piljerk Peter, Sanctified Sophie, Tabernacle, Mercantile, and Wilkes Booth Linclon. According to the kindly, if unenlightened, philosophy of this series (which was continued by Emma Speed Sampson after Calhoun's death), the only thing black people need to be happy is a white family to serve and look after. The books further indicate that black men tend to be lazy and shiftless, while black women tend to be dominant and ambitious. All black people are good-natured and happy and have few, if any, sorrows and worries, largely because they have very poorly developed consciences and a convenient understanding of religion that pardons all transgressions very easily and freely. *THE FORBIDDEN TRAIL*, part of the *MELODY LANE* series by Lilian Garis, makes a similar point. "She turned and saw a little colored boy...He had the usual grin peculiar to small colored boys that makes white teeth sparkle behind brown skin." It turns out that this particular lad's name is George Washington Rush-nicknamed "Snib" because, "he takes things."

In *THE TERROR AT MOANING CLIFF*, in the same series, we meet another young black lad suffering from a paroxysm of fear in the best (Willie Best) tradition of "Feets don't fail me now." He is all trembling incoherency, punctuated by rolling eyes which show whitely against his dark complexion. The superstition, supposedly a part of the disposition native to those of African-American heritage, is exaggerated here to complement the stereotype and create humor.

The faithful family retainer aspect of black characters is probably best demonstrated in the popular *TOM SWIFT* series in the person of Eradicate Sampson. "Rad" is totally devoted to the Swifts. He is aging, moves in a slow shuffle, and owns an aging mule which seems to be his sole possession and is the pride of his life. "Rad" speaks in the same thick dialect usually given to African-American characters in series books and has the same pattern of word substitutions. As well, "Rad" is totally convinced that the Swifts cannot possibly get along without him, even though he actually does very little for them. It is difficult to judge whether the authors of these series are reflecting their own points of view, the generally held views of the time, or both. Nonetheless, young people received the message that African-American people were somehow lesser than Caucasians.

African-American characters are almost always depicted as menials: cooks, maids, butlers, handymen, janitors, and chauffeurs. George, the chauffeur in the *DANA GIRLS SECRET AT THE GATEHOUSE*, by "Carolyn Keene," is an unobtrusive character until he passes a graveyard while driving the Danas and their companions through the countryside on a search for a missing millionaire. This incident allows the author of the book to have some fun at George's expense. Like Garis, "Keene" works on the stereotype of African-American superstition. Also telling is the fact that the farm folk, who offer our group a night's shelter, are reluctant to have George stay in the house. They want to put him out in the barn for the night. Their excuse is their fear that he might steal from them, but the fact is that they simply do not want to offer George their hospitality because of his race.

One of the most distasteful aspects of series books is the wide

range of offensive racial designations which are used, ostensibly, for humor, and are frequently voiced by these minority characters themselves! This catalogue of these terms is too disgusting to list, but suffice it to say that the kindest is "colored person." Certainly these books provided young readers, who might have never heard these terms, with an extensive, and fairly hateful, vocabulary for prejudice.

The other, more dangerous, persona of black characters is probably best shown in two, now infamous, offerings from the popular NANCY DREW and HARDY BOYS series of books. THE CLUE OF THE TAPPING HEELS finds girl sleuth, Nancy, threatened by the villainous "freckled-faced" black man and his brother, Omar, who passes himself off as an Egyptian. These men threaten, extort, kidnap, bilk, blackmail, steal, and prey on the weak. Interestingly enough, these men seem to associate with other swarthy males who are not of the Negroid race. Obviously, in the mind of this author, "Birds of a feather flock together." This is the message being fed into the minds of the young readers.

Frank and Joe Hardy propagate rampant racism in THE HIDDEN HARBOR MYSTERY. As the Hardys and Chet Morton attempt to prove themselves innocent of a theft to which they stand accused, they are constantly thwarted by Luke Jones, a young African-American, who affects flashy dress and sports a large, valuable diamond ring. The reader knows, at once, that Luke is a villain: nonWASPs have dubious taste in their choice of styles and colors of clothing and so do villains. Luke also wears a diamond ring, and everyone knows that diamond rings for men are worn only by those wishing to show off, or those who have no taste. Naturally, villains have no taste. (Tiffany's, that bastion of righteous American correctness, still refuses to sell diamond rings for men.) Luke tells us early on, in his decided dialect, that he will stand for no foolishness from white people. He does not, since he is, in fact, the leader of a secret club of Negroes whose purpose is to harass and injure white people when at all possible. We see that Luke is a liar, a betrayer, a thief, a manipulator, and he goes so far as to strike down defenseless, elderly, white women and to attempt murder. He enjoys creating chaos among white people and then sitting back and watching the results with pleasure. Luke has influence over others like him, and this is truly frightening, given his transparent malevolence. If a character who is this obvious and ignorant can have influence over others, then the others must be truly stupid and evil. The plot ends in a near lynching, but there is a surprise twist in that the men who are nearly lynched are white. However, the event is plainly used as a lesson and a threat to black people. This plot seems to say that African-Americans are extremely dangerous to the establishment and must be kept firmly "in place."

Before series books were rewritten in the mid to late 1950s, it was not unusual to find such outright prejudicial portraits of minority Americans. Even though Edwin Forest, the great American actor, popularized Native Americans as noble characters on the 19th century stage, subsequent audiences preferred to regard the red man as either a heartless savage or a clownish, comic character.

Both the LONE RANGER series, by Fran Stryker, and THE LONG TRAIL BOYS series, by "Dale Wilkins" were an attempt at presenting the noble Indian in the respective characters of Tonto and White Shadow. "Wilkins" describes White Shadow as an intensely handsome, creative man, somehow untamed, but still innately good. He is unusually wise and at peace with himself, and all of nature. Because of his almost supernatural goodness, he hates and fights against wrong-doing and evil, and because of his wisdom, he usually emerges victorious from his fight. In fact, White Shadow

is so perfect that he assumes mythic proportions and seems not to be a real character at all. Given all these virtues, it seems odd that "Wilkins" writes an elaborated version of the stereotypical "Ugh, How" dialogue for his creation.

Stryker's Tonto is probably one of the best known fictional Indians of the World War II generation. Friend of the white man, side-kick of the masked rider, Tonto fights against his own people to protect white settlers in the Western territories. Certainly, this should prove that whites are the superior race. Even Tonto, who may be more enlightened than most red men because he is half white, can see this. Probably his white half accounts for his nobility and superior courage as well. At any rate, Tonto plainly identifies with white men rather than his brother Native Americans.

Certainly "Wilkins" would disagree with Stryker, for after White Shadow helps the LONG TRAIL BOYS to overcome a villainous half-breed (SWEET WATER RANCK), one of the characters of the book says that there is nothing meaner than a "half-breed." He can't decide which side of him he hates worse, so he hates Indians and white men and tries to profit from and hurt both if he can.

"Wilkins" does distinguish between "good" and "bad" Native Americans. Very simply, the "good" ones like white men; the "bad" ones do not. The bad ones are the ones who commit bloodthirsty, sadistic atrocities, and these are the very Indians that Stryker likes to write about in his LONE RANGER series. He also likes to detail the atrocities and describe the pleasure that the Indians take in torturing and slowly burning their victims to death at the stake. Of course, these descriptions seem to justify a negative attitude toward the first Americans. Juvenile readers are left with a mixed message about the character of Indians.

Even at that, they probably feel the way most of the girls at Primrose Hall do. Margaret Vandercook's RANCH GIRLS leave the West and go East to boarding school. Olive, adopted sister of Jean and Frieda Ralston, is excluded from the society of the other students, when gossip circulates that she is, at least, half Indian. One of the young women says that she simply could not associate with some dirty Indian, so Olive becomes anathema. When everyone, Olive included, discovers that Olive is not Indian, but actually the long lost grand-daughter of a wealthy and socially influential woman who lives in a mansion across the river from the school, Olive is not only accepted, but she is also crowned Queen of the May. The other students, sorry for their treatment of her, admit to being short-sighted. "After all," they say, "she is so delicate and refined that we should have known that she was not an Indian." That one statement seems to tell us what an Indian is not.

Actually, Olive is no better than her schoolmates: she spends her time brooding on the fact that she does not want to be a dirty, lazy, ignorant Indian. She has always seemed more white than Indian to herself. In point of fact, Olive, victim of illogical prejudice and racism, is, herself, a racist at heart.

In addition to White Shadow in the LONG TRAIL series, "wilkins" includes two other Native American characters as comic relief: Shy Beaver, an old Navaho, and Agunta, an older Yaqui chieftain. While they possess all the legendary skills of fictional Indians (riding, tracking, wood-lore, and strength), they are child-like and simple. They like to wear bright, outlandish clothing topped off with either high silk or derby hats, and crave sweets like children. Their dialogue is punctuated with grunts and could best be described as "laconic." These two characters are made much of by the LONG TRAIL BOYS, but the jokes and fun are generally at the expense of the Indians. They become figures of fun, and

even when they do something deliberately and seriously, that action produces hilarity in the boys. In series books, Native Americans never achieve reality. Unfortunately, most young readers, between the turn-of-the-century and 1955, had no actual information as to what an Indian was really like.

Whether AmerInds live in Mexico, the United States, Canada, or Alaska, certain stereotypes are always present. Though climate may change the lifestyle of the tribes, readers are still taught prejudicial stereotypes. DICK KENT WITH THE ESKIMO displays the Eskimo as child-like and rather dull in intelligence. The means that these tribespeople use to protect themselves from the elements, as well as their hygienic practices and habits, are censured and exploited in this book. These Inuit characters are depicted as being lazy and so concerned with their own survival, that they are not concerned with the welfare or well-being of any others save for themselves and their families. Some go "bad," but most of them are too indolent to chose wrong-doing, because being bad takes so much energy and is too much trouble. This is yet one more example of the sort of disparagement heaped on the reputations of the first Americans.

In series set in the Southwestern United States, Native Americans are not the only culture to be vilified. Hispanics also receive their share of prejudicial stereotyping.

In AUNT JANE'S NIECES ON THE RANCH, by "Edith Van Dyne" (Reilly & Britton, 1913), we find the following definition of "Mexicans:"

Those California inhabitants whom we call, for convenience, 'Mexicans,' are not all natives of Mexico, by any means. Most of them are a mixed breed derived from the early Spanish settlers and the native Indian tribes—both alike practically extinct in this locality—and have never stepped foot in Mexican territory, although the boundary line is not far distant. Because the true Mexican is generally a similar ad mixture of Indian and Spaniard, it is customary to call these Californians by the same appellation. (73)

Since, according to the author's admission, these people have never set foot in Mexico, it seems strange that they would not be called Californians, as "she" says, or maybe, even more simply, Americans. Yet, most of these people have two prejudicial strikes against them: a darker complexion than the Anglos and a faith founded in the Roman Catholic Church. If the Hispanic characters are of mixed origin, they tend to be given one of two personas: menials or villains—unless they happen to be of pure Spanish descent. If, indeed, the character is of uninterrupted Spanish heritage, he or she is usually shown as a slightly arrogant, detached, aloof individual, who is drawn, grudgingly, with a kind of nobility by the author. (The Spanish are, after all, "foreigners," and most have Mediterranean coloring, and most are Roman Catholic.)

The typical Hispanic character is represented as somewhat slow and more than a little indolent. In AUNT JANE'S NIECES, Uncle John asks Arthur, who employs "Mexicans" to work his citrus grove and farm, if it is not true that Mexicans are lazy and poor workers. Arthur replies that it is, indeed, true, but that Mexicans work so cheaply that it is possible to hire many of them, get the job done, and still not have to pay as much as it would take to hire one good "American" worker. (Interestingly enough, this reason—i.e. "foreigners" or other special groups displacing American workers—is still a major reason for prejudice and its perpetuation today.)

In this volume of AUNT JANE'S NIECES adventures, we meet only one class of Hispanic: the menial. Inez is the nurse to Louise's new baby. Inez is an attractive woman whose passions are easily aroused and engaged.

She is devoted to her charge, little Jane, and her pride is wounded when Patsy, Beth, and Uncle John bring a nurse, Mildred, from New York with them.

After a letter from Louise, the girls and Uncle John discover that little Jane suffered from colic terribly until Inez administered a native concoction to her. The girls decide it must have been some nasty stuff that could have badly harmed the baby. With that conclusion, the girls and their uncle decide to visit the baby and her parents in California and bring along a real nurse to care for the baby. Inez's primitive passions surface, and she hates Mildred with every fiber of her being, until she finally decides to kill her rival. But, her mercurial nature undergoes a change soon after, and she declares to all that she loves "Meeldreed."

Both Inez and Miguel, the aged foreman of the ranch, speak in a kind of broken English that is heavy on the long "e" sounds and interspersed with a few of those Spanish words that every high school student knows. Like the African-American menial characters, Hispanic menials only want an Anglo family to worship, adore, and serve in order to be happy. Of course, they do have a tendency to steal small objects (especially shiny ones that can be used to adorn themselves), lie, avoid work, and wear gaudy clothes. They are also superstitious, and drink too much alcohol. But they are lovable, and good help is so hard to come by.

And, how do the WASPs, their superiors, treat them? When the Boy Scouts set out to find and meet Pancho Villa, in *THE BOY SCOUTS UNDER FIRE IN MEXICO*, they plainly show their disgust and distrust of all the Hispanics that they meet, even Villa. Lopez, the guide for the expedition, is described as a villainous-looking man, none too clean in appearance. In spite of that fact, the scouts allow him to prepare their food, but he sits off by himself to eat the portion of the food that he has prepared. When they bed down for the night, the four scouts spread their bed rolls near one another. Lopez sleeps apart, sitting up, back against a tree, head cradled on crossed arms resting on upright knees. This image might be called a visual stereotype. Yet, the scouts appreciate Lopez, who is faithful, experienced, efficient, and expedient. He is also their interpreter, because he speaks English, and they speak no more than a few words of Spanish. The boys openly compliment Lopez to his face, by speaking in his hearing about his fine points and virtues: that he is a dirty-looking scoundrel, but that he is all right for a "Greaser," and that for a "Mex," he seems to be O.K. Probably these generous compliments cause the heart of Lopez to leap for joy when he overhears them. Of course, the scouts probably feel exceptionally magnanimous for their acceptance of an obvious inferior.

And, later on, when the scouts chance upon a battle between Villa's supporters and the National Army, the scouts throw in with Villa's men. Because the "Greasers" are running around like a "pack of monkeys finding a coconut" (Payson 218), the scouts take it on themselves to reorganize Villa's whole defense, which results in the defeat of the Nationals. These four boys earn the undying gratitude and respect, not only of Villa's men, but of Pancho Villa, himself. Of course, they continue to refer to all citizens of Mexico as "Greasers," "Mexs," and to cast aspersions on the quality of their personal hygiene.

The majority of Mexican men, however, seem to be born bandits— according to series book lore. The Long Trail Boys engage in a running battle with the same group of Mexican bandits all the way through their South of the border adventure. The X BAR X BOYS get into their adventure ON WHIRLPOOL RIVER because of Joe Marino. If Joe had been riding fence instead of slipping off the job to get drunk, the X Bar X cattle would

not have strayed off the Manley Range and been rustled. Joe, we learn, is a cowardly sneak who is out for revenge. He steals a horse and \$400 from the Manleys and attempts to pull a knife on Teddy, the younger Manley son. It is this action which causes Teddy to realize that Joe is, in actuality, a Greaser," passing for an American Anglo. Joe Marino is actually Jules Kolto, an infamous gunman, who has left his native Mexico, where there was a price on his head, and is hiding out, on the run, in the United States.

The X BAR X BOYS have a lot of trouble with Mexicans, as do the BOY RANCHERS. In each case, these fine, upstanding ideals of American boyhood identify Hispanics with various unflattering epithets directly to their faces. In these novels, Hispanics are shown to be cheaters, rustlers, kidnappers, highwaymen, smugglers, and frequently, murderers. In nearly every case, they are sadistic bullies, gloating over their captives or victims, and delighting in recounting the cruel fates in store for these unfortunate prisoners; however, when the tables are turned and the bullies are captured, they become sniveling cowards, begging and pleading for their lives and for mercy.

In all of these Southwestern adventures, Hispanics are made to be largely untrustworthy and definitely inferior to the worthy and definitely (as depicted) vastly superior WASP culture. In truth, very few juvenile series books attempt to acknowledge differences in cultures, nor do they attempt to illustrate that one culture is as valuable to civilization as another. They do not attempt to explain that different is merely that—different—and that different is not bad or wrong; it is only different. In these books, however, WASP is the given standard and is the only acceptable standard for American youth, male or female.

These stereotypes of Hispanics probably resulted more from motion pictures than from stage portrayals of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Hispanic character did not fit so well in the melodramas of city life which were popular on the stage. The freedom involved in making films on location, as well as the popularity of screen Westerns, caused great use of the Hispanic character, particularly as villain. This usage of the stock character caused a tarnished image of Hispanics to be perceived by the majority of Americans. Even the HARDY BOYS (THE MARK ON THE DOOR) suffered at the hands of the villainous Mexican, although Frank and Joe did refrain from using any kind of pejorative epithets or racial expressions for Mexicans.

Tellingly enough, most North Americans entering Mexico to track down Pancho Villa, solve mysteries, or to generally make life better for the poor peons do not speak more than a few words of Spanish. They are incensed when the natives do not speak enough English to communicate with them. CHERRY AMES is sent to Central America by the Army. As an Army nurse, she will be taking care of Americans mostly, but unless the native nurses speak English, she cannot communicate with them. While the stereotypes of African-Americans and Native Americans are pretty well discarded in juvenile series books after 1960, Biff Brewster and Vickie Barr still have to face Hispanic bandits, thieves, and smugglers and find Latin America a generally dangerous place, where no one can be trusted and people are not what they seem.

Another frequently maligned culture in popular literature before 1960 is that of the Asian. The exotic Asian was sometimes a figure in the popular stage melodramas of the early century. Frequently shown as the proprietor of a low opium den, the Asian developed a stereotypical villainous image. As in the case of Hispanics, however, it was film which evolved a consistent image of the Asian character: inscrutability, tongs, opium dens, smuggling, war hatchets, cooks, "no tickee, no washee," "honor-

able ancestors." Asians were depicted as quaint Chinese Sherlock Holmeses (Charlie Chan), vaguely humorous, but methodical; as a "Yellow Peril" (Fu Manchu), lethal and maliciously deadly; or menials, cooking food and washing clothes. Until World War II, no great distinction was made between Asians, but with World War II, the "Yellow Peril" accusation was applied directly to the Japanese.

Many of the previous contentions can be illustrated by THE DRAGON OF THE HILLS, one of the MELODY LANE series (1936). When Carol Duncan inquires where Dorothy Graham acquired the Dragon of the Hills sign for her new tea shop, Dorothy explains that the Chinese sign was painted by a Japanese dealer in Orientalia. The name of the Japanese dealer is Wu Ting—more of a Chinese name than a Japanese one. Later, Dorothy is visited by a sinister man who is "either a Chinese or a Japanese," named Wong Sut. He leaves a card which Dorothy would not accept directly from him, fearing that she might have to touch his hand.

Wong Sut is the perfect candidate for the villain of the story. Someone is prowling about the shop after dark, and that person, like Wong Sut, smokes exotic Ambar cigarettes, which have a most distinctive odor. After one such incident, Carol finds an Oriental scarf or cravat, which she picks up gingerly, by her fingertips. Not knowing who may have worn it, she intends to hold it by a bit of paper, but settles for washing her hands thoroughly after handling it. The climax of the story reveals that Wong St is a very respectable Chinese gentleman, who owns an Oriental import business. He is not the sinister prowler, but he is searching for a valuable commodity that has been stolen from him. He also runs several miles to get help for Carol after a landslide traps her in a cave she is investigating.

The indication is that Asians are suspicious and sinister, no matter how honest and respectable they may be. We also understand that people who are different are, somehow, dangerously unclean, and we should not touch or be touched by them, or anything that they wear.

Yet, it is perfectly all right to eat any food prepared by these people, no matter how dirty we might think that they are. Almost every series set in the Southwest has a Chinese cook character. AUNT JANE'S NIECES have a Chinese cook on the ranch, and the X BAR X BOYS have a Chinese cook who prepares the bunkhouse meals (but not those for the family). In THE LONE RANGER, there is a Chinese cook for the railroad gang.

The BOY RANCHERS fight a gang of rustlers who are also engaged in smuggling Chinese into the country. These smuggled Chinese, who will work as cooks or laundrymen, will then be compelled to pay a portion of their salaries to their smugglers for most of the rest of their lives.

A similar plot is used when the HARDY BOYS run afoul of a like situation in FOOTPRINTS UNDER THE WINDOW. At the same time, the author manages to incorporate, into one book, almost every Asian stereotype ever conceived. The plot begins when Frank and Joe take their shirts to Sam Le's laundry, only to learn that the laundry is now being operated by Louie Fong, an evil-appearing, ill-tempered man who does not seem to want their dirty clothes. The plot thickens when the brothers meet Tom Watt, employee of a Chinese restaurant and victim of an attempted murder. To protect Tom, the boys hit upon the idea of disguising him as a woman. His small stature, delicate features, and high pitched voice make the disguise so successful that the Hardys' girl friends actually become slightly jealous of the new "girl," and all of their male buddies want to meet "her." Tom hates the disguise, which robs him of all his dignity, but since his character is made to fluctuate between abject terror and near cowardice to real courage and bravery, he consents to wear it for a

time.

In the meantime, Louie Fong is developed into a villain worthy of the pages of a Sax Rohmer novel. He is subtle, cruel, and totally devoid of any conscience or humanity. He even fights with the proverbial war hatchet. Everyone who knows him is afraid of him.

However, this particular book is, possibly, the most hilarious of the HARDY canon. These stereotypes are so broad, and the situations so improbable, that any vestige of pretense at taking this mystery seriously is nearly impossible. The small laundry building, which is furnished with secret rooms, trap doors, and underground tunnels, is ludicrous in and of itself. Still, the message comes through clearly. For example, the dialogue of the Chinese is strictly the worst form of pidgin English—almost every word ends with "ee." As well, Asians seem to come in only two types: good and bad. The bad ones are insidious, greedy, cruel, and fiendishly intelligent. The good ones are not too intelligent, servile, work at menial jobs, live on little money, and are easily frightened into trembling fits by the bad ones. These stereotypical extremes would seem to prove that Asians deserve to be excluded from the mainstream of society.

By the time World War II began, CHERRY AMES could pal around with a Chinese girl, Mai Lee, who was a fellow nursing student. The character of Mai Lee is being used as an instrument of propaganda against the Japanese, when she explains how the Chinese village, where her family lived, was bombed by the Japanese. During the war years, Chinese were sympathetic and good characters, but hatred was aroused against the Japanese. This would reverse itself in only a few years' time, as the Chinese would join the Communist block. These war years would also introduce a number of war story series such as those featuring RED RANDALL and LUCKY TERRELL and the FREEDOM FIGHTERS series from Whitman Press. While the stories are stereotypical and prejudicial, they are examples of pardonable prejudice against an enemy in time of war. They seem to help Americans by focusing on a specific enemy rather than an abstract policy of war. The books do not limit themselves in portraying only the Japanese as villains and perpetrators of inhuman atrocities, but include the Nazis and the Italian Fascists for their share of negative feelings an propaganda as well.

It is understandable that, in time of war, enemies to our country be portrayed as negatively as possible, but unfortunately, that engendered hatred for an enemy endures long after the need for it has passed—and certainly much longer than is healthful or necessary.

One minority group seldom touched on in juvenile series books is the Jewish character. This seems strange, since the comic Jew had been a staple since Shakespeare's time and was at the height of its popularity during the time of vaudeville and burlesque, when the stage was filled with Jewish comedians. Yet, when the character does appear, it is usually in the form of a broad satire. The Jewish character is stereotypically money-conscious, eager to cut a deal favorable to him/herself, and is a potential, but usually highly inept, villain. Frank Hardy's disguise as a Jewish peddler in THE HIDDEN HARBOR MYSTERY is as stereotypical as the accent he uses, which can only be compared to Fanny Brice doing one of her "Mrs. Cohen" monologues. He does manage to omit "Oi Vey."

Of course, some cultures are every bit as exclusive as they are excluded. The Romanies have always been subjects of mystery and romance. Charlotte Cushman, the first internationally acclaimed American actress, retained a Gypsy role in her repertory for most of her career. Part of the mystery associated with the Romanies is the question of their origin. It is generally thought that the term "Gypsy" is derived from "Egyptian." However, their language seems to have its roots in India. The appearance

of Gypsies in Europe dates back hundreds of years, as do the stereotypes that surround them: the open road, the throb of violins and the jingle of the tambourine, a dancing swirl of bright skirts, huge earrings along with clanking bracelets and the rattle of beads, amulets, swindles, thefts, kidnappings, "Cross my palm with silver," and fortune telling.

The MELODY LANE series makes extensive use of Gypsies. THE DRAGON OF THE HILLS offers old Zada and her daughter. Zada is a good woman who is true to her word and the Gypsy way of life, but is trustworthy. She does, however, distrust anyone who is not a Romany. She is taciturn and grim, but she knows ancient arts and secrets for dyeing yarns and threads. Her daughter is a fortune teller and a swindler who cheats the superstitious and the gullible. She attempts to steal a valuable secret, and is also involved with a man who nearly commits murder in order to have a chance at obtaining that secret for himself.

Many literary works refer to the carefree life of the Gypsies. Translated, this seems to mean that Gypsies have neither conscience nor ethics to worry them. Yet, in the DANA GIRLS MYSTERY AT THE CROSSROADS, the Gypsies are not all bad. Still, the ones who are, trick and cheat even the members of their own clan. In this book, the tribe shows graphically that Gypsies do not care to know or to trust outsiders. They are complete within themselves, and their own customs and traditions constitute the only laws that they recognize. It is the outsiders' unfamiliarity with these customs and traditions that make the Gypsies seem vaguely sinister and threatening, and manages to frighten Jean and Louise.

Indeed, this tribe of Gypsies does, unknowingly, harbor a gang of thieves and tricksters, who manage to benefit monetarily from others. There are also fortune tellers and musicians among them.

In particular, this story is about two young lovers who are modernizing and adapting to Western ways, rather than adhering to the traditional ways and customs which govern the lives of the Romany people. From the standpoint of the WASP, this is good; from the Gypsy standpoint, it is bad. These young people resent the Gypsy reputation for supernatural powers and beliefs in curses, amulets, and charms.

Unfortunately, no one is happy to see the Gypsies come to town, for it is believed that they bring trouble with them: livestock disappears, clothes are stolen from lines, vegetables are taken from gardens, and sometimes, children vanish. In THE SECRET OF THE KASHMIR SHAWL, also by Garis, the theme of theft continues as the ancient Indian wrap is being used to smuggle a fabulous stolen emerald. The shawl, purchased from a stall in Egypt, is now being pursued by a group of people determined to regain possession of the jewel. Garis never identifies the nationality of the people who persecute the shawl's present owner in their attempt to regain possession of the item, but she does say that they are a part of a world-wide network who have followed the owner from Egypt. The description of these people and their techniques of frightening their victim certainly remind the reader of the Gypsy stereotype. Not only that, but the shawl from India, purchased in Egypt, reminds us of the two theories for the origin of Gypsies.

The extortionists of the Kashmir shawl adventure actually may be Egyptians. If so, Arabs are also exotic and darker complexioned and have always made excellent romantic villains, especially when portrayed by Rudolph Valentino on the screen. British novelists have always been fond of Arab villains, and Edgar Rice Burroughs followed their lead by making Arabs and the Portuguese his favorite villains in the TARZAN series. Of course, he also enjoyed using the Germans as villains during the African occupation of World War II.

Actually, almost any minority group or subculture can be considered threatening to the WASP supremacy. When the BOY CHUMS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO try their hands at sponge diving, they are pirated by the villainous Greeks who normally control the sponge industry. It is common to find almost any nationality used as the stereotypical villain in series books before 1960, and especially if they tend toward darker complexions and social customs radically different from those of the Anglo.

Over and over again, the message is bombarded into small hearts and brains: WASP is the standard of measurement, and anything else is inferior. A WASP is a fine, upstanding, moral individual who is serious-minded, and is taken seriously by others. Non-WASPs may be good people, but they lack the courage, intellect, and ingenuity of a WASP. WASPs laugh at others, but others do not laugh at WASPs. A WASP is morally superior to all others; that is why so many others are thieves, killers, abusers, and oppressors of their fellows. Non-WASPs hate WASPs because they instinctively recognize the innate supremacy that radiates from each and every White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, and non-WASPs are jealous of that quality.

By 1960, the United States was undergoing a cultural and social enlightenment that had its beginnings a few short years before. In this new age of brotherhood, individuals were judged according to whom they, themselves, were, rather than according to what race or ethnic group they belonged. By this time, some of the series books had been rewritten to omit racially offensive stereotypes and slurs. At the same time, television and film began depicting non-WASP characters as friends and sidekicks to Anglo protagonists.

Nancy, Frank, Joe, Jean, and Louise were making friends with members of other races and ethnics. Judy Bolton was learning to appreciate and like Native Americans over on Fog Island, and Chris Cool was sleuthing it up with a Native American sidekick. Bronc Burnett's team included Juan Garcia and Nowtah, a Native American, while Chip Hilton and Jimmy Lu Chung were basketball wizards. In the meantime, Cherry Ames and her friend, Mai Lee, were working at becoming the last two virgins from their first year nursing class.

We replaced our enemies. They were no longer people with whom we shared our country, government, and freedoms. Our enemies now came from countries within the Soviet Block: agents who were determined to help to topple capitalism, free enterprise, and the basic freedoms that democracy guaranteed. Then, as Arab nations gained control of the world's energy supply and Japan surpassed the United States in education and technology, they took on villain status again. Communist China, in the Viet Nam era, became independently villainous, and representative of the old "Yellow Peril" threat.

The plain and simple fact is that, anytime people regard another group or culture as being a threat to their established way of life, the hatred and propaganda begin, and those prejudices are passed right along to the children. They learn it through what they see, hear, and read, and propaganda is extremely potent when it is used in entertainment. Over a hundred years ago, the stage helped to pass stereotypes and prejudices right along to the authors who wrote the books that youngsters read. The children absorbed those biases without analyzing them for what they were, while they were being entertained by them. That cycle will continue so long as people who are non-WASPs frighten and threaten those who are. Until we can consider other cultures and races without weighing them against ourselves as standards, there will always be prejudice and racism.

If a contemporary series used a non-WASP hero, would it sell well enough to justify continued publication? Does the WASP ideal still live?

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PRICELESS MEMORIES FROM LONG AGO

By Rocco Musemeche

A rain-hung night, a drowsy Sunday afternoon, a tedious period before dusk or a boring assortment of acquaintances prompts one to either take to the hills or as in my case a retreat to my library for further gathering of forces.

The object of my exodus one day recently was the ancient roll-top desk in a corner, its myriad compartments stuffed by a thousand or so letters received from friend and foe the past thirty years. Above the desk a series of photos look down on my malaise, and while they may be strangers to a visitor, to me they are companions rich in the knowledge of books and folks gifted with the hunting scent we are all afflicted with, more or less.

These are Jack Dizer, Lydia Schurman, Joe Ruttar, Dee Dee Johnson, Al Tonik, Kathleen Chamberlain, Eddie LeBlanc, Bill Gowen, and the late Bob Chenu. Above this panoply is a sketch of Theodore Roscoe and pegged above him is a kepi, French Foreign Legion headgear Ted picked up on the sands of the Sahara during one of his very own campaigns to hostile territory.

My mission this particular day, was to rummage around in hopes of running across past letters from long ago folks who were collectors from whom I purchased books. It was quite a lark but it did bring moisture to the eyes. It also nursed along the bitter-sweet pangs of nostalgia.

Groping brought forth a letter from Bill Lippincott dated December, 1982, with a 20¢ stamp affixed to the envelope. The contents offered five DON STURDY books and Bill allowed as how \$7 would reserve them in my name. I well remember that one for all five are boxed in the very room in which I read. Where is Bill? Does anyone know?

I thumb past a few letters and single out another from the same state where Bill kept his book store, Maine. This one is from North Berwick, and here Bill Riviere operated what I still consider to be the most enchantingly named book store, Doughty's Falls Old Book Shop. It sort of conjurs up a scene taken from an 1898 calendar, a rundown structure on Main Street under a chestnut tree beside a brook with the aroma of books encircling the area.

Indeed, receiving a package of books purchased from Riviere did carry a whiff of olden favorites. Purchased from him were several ROVER BOYS, and some JERRY TODD and POPPY OTTS. And he sure was not a price-gouger.

Look over my shoulder to a letter from him dated August 6, 1976, to where you may judge upon his fairness. In fine condition 17 ROVER BOYS of different titles for \$15; 23 TOM SWIFTS at \$2 each; nine TED SCOTTS for \$10; and an assortment of TODDS, OTTS and TRIGGER BERGS for \$10.

Bill Riviere mentioned settling in Maine during a vacation in 1939 and now all efforts to locate him fall flat. Anyone know his whereabouts? Here is a February 11, 1963, letter from Ralph F. Cummings who operated Ralph's Old Timer's Mart in South Grafton, Massachusetts, and, yes, you guessed it, Ralph sure did please his customers. Never been to his Mart but I'll bet it was a browser's delight.

Here too, Ralph used an amiable approach and knocked-down prices. You had to find something you need in his 15,000 volume stockpile. However it's my recall he was near tears when he could not come up with a Percival Christopher Wren book I ordered. However, he could offer other items to attract your attention such as old post cards: 30 for \$1; 1919 *Needlecraft* magazines at a buck each; Tom Mix biography for \$2.50; old

steamboat and railroad bills from 1850 to the 1870s at \$2.50 an assortment; and for \$1 each Ralph offered a copy of SHE, by H. Rider Haggard, and your pick of theatre programs.

Next we look over a flyer from Rita Coriell urging membership in the Burroughs Bibliophiles, a publication her husband Vernell took the time and trouble to found and become its editor. This immensely popular publication went out to perpetuate the name of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Vernell is still remembered although it's been several years that he passed away.

Another letter surfaces, this one dated December 27, 1971, in which he reminds his Williamsport, Maryland, home not only is home of his Purple Sage Trading Post book store of Zane Grey novels, but a fanzine *The Zane Grey Collector*. The letter points out that in his opinion RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE was the best the western author ever wrote. In one issue of *The Collector*, Farley added a feature which clarified the first edition tangle which confused many.

The reading of these letters did much to allay the blues felt upon hearing of the demise of a good many of the fine folks from whom I purchased books I treasure. One I may mention is Norm Hopper, who expired at his Sunnyvale, California, home a few months ago.

And imagine, here is the stub of a football game ticket: another one of my Priceless Memories From Long Ago.

* * * * *

LETTER

Wrote to Gil O'gara to question him on what the full page deal was all about re: "Watch Out for The Big One." He sent a card to me clarifying that simply enough it was an ad from David Farish to create interest.

A streak of luck that came my way after losing my brother to cancer was the assurance from Pat Brown that I would be given a slot on the Friday schedule at the Chicago convention. This gives me time for two days to visit about a dozen folks I think most about.

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